

JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MATTHEW 5-7; LUKE 6



KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 5:16

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus taught how people in His kingdom have hearts that love God and love others. But because of sin, no one always does what is right and good. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and changes our hearts so we can live in ways that glorify Him.

STORY POINT: Jesus taught how people in God's kingdom live.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

The Sermon on the Mount is one of the most well-known and recognizable sermons in all of history. The truth it contains, however, is quite polarizing, calling people into a new way of life that runs counterintuitive to our sin nature.

When Jesus taught His followers the ways of His Father's kingdom, He shared truths meant to guide them in repentance, obedience, and love for God and one another. Much of what Jesus shared in the Sermon on the Mount reinforced the reality that God's ways are not like those of the world (Isaiah 55:8–9). Life in God's kingdom runs opposed to the world's wisdom, but the God who created us knows how we can flourish in the world He made—by seeking the Lord as our greatest treasure and submitting to His authority.

Jesus declared that those who seek God's kingdom first will experience His loving provision, both in this lifetime and for all eternity. The way of the kingdom is not by means of earthly power but by Christlikeness; it's not by ruling over others but by submitting to God's rule over our lives. Jesus declared that our faith is meant to impact every detail of our lives—from surrendering our will to His (Matthew 6:10), taking our worries to Him (Matthew 6:25), and building our lives on the foundations of His Word (Matthew 7:24–27).

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke to people who knew what it was like to be hungry, dismissed, and oppressed. While the scribes and Pharisees hoped to achieve righteousness by rigorously obeying the law, Jesus explained that He came to earth to fulfill the law—to make the way for His followers to be counted as righteous by faith in Him alone. Through faith, we receive new hearts that help us obey our Father.

This week, lead the boys and girls in your class to see that the ways of the kingdom become our ways when we surrender our plans to God's will. Pray that they will desire to live as He lived through the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.



Scan the QR code to listen to The Gospel Project for Kids Weekly Leader Training Podcast.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "You Are Worth More!" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ plastic cups



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "Jesus' Sermon on the Mount" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ play dough (optional)
- ☐ picture of the Mount of Beatitudes (optional, and found through an online image search)

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 23, Session 4" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Erik and Ida Nelson Photo" printable

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ balloons
- ☐ "Shine (Matthew 5:16)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ bowl
- ☐ cereal
- ☐ drinking straws, 1 per kid
- ☐ banana
- ☐ salad tongs
- ☐ jelly
- ☐ bread
- ☐ paper towels
- ☐ Allergy Alert

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ balloon
- ☐ light bulb

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible story coloring page



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “ If you could rule a kingdom, what would it look like? What would you name it? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “You Are Worth More!” activity page.

| **SAY** “ By carefully looking at each picture, you were able to tell which birds and flowers were different. In today’s story, Jesus used birds and flowers to teach a crowd of people about God’s kingdom. ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: CRAZY CUPS

Before the session, scatter plastic cups in different places around the room; place half of the cups upside down and the other half right side up. Separate the kids into two teams. Explain that one team will flip the cups upside down while the other team works to flip the cups right side up. Place the teams on opposite sides of the room. When you say Go, the kids must run around and try to flip the cups. Share that the kids cannot move the cups, only flip them. When you say Stop, the kids must return to their team’s side. Whichever team has the most cups flipped to their orientation wins.

| **SAY** “ Similar to how you flipped the cups the opposite way, Jesus commands His followers to act in the opposite way of how the world does. Together we are going to learn that **JESUS TAUGHT HOW PEOPLE IN GOD’S KINGDOM LIVE.** ”

☐ OPTION 2: REVERSE COMMANDS



Invite the kids to stand in a circle. Ask for a volunteer to stand in the middle. Explain that this volunteer will be the leader. The leader will give commands such as sit down, close your eyes, spin right, etc. Instruct the kids to do the opposite of the command the leader gives (i.e. if told to sit down, they must stand up). If any kid does not perform the opposite of the command, he or she must sit down. Play several rounds, allowing the kids to take turns being the leader.

| **SAY** “ Trying to follow opposite commands is challenging! But Jesus reminded His followers that they are called to act differently than the world. Today we will learn that **JESUS TAUGHT HOW PEOPLE IN GOD’S KINGDOM LIVE.** ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Welcome, kids! I’m so glad you’re here. My name is [your name], and I’m excited to read another story with you in the Gospels. Who can remind me which Testament the Gospels are found in? [Allow responses.] Let’s take out our Bibles and turn together to the New Testament. [Distribute a Bible to any kid who needs one.] Our story is found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Last week, we learned that Jesus rules over everything. Today we will discover what Jesus taught about life in God’s kingdom. Let’s pray together before we open God’s Word. ‘Thank You, God, for giving us Your Word to guide our paths. Ready our hearts and minds as we learn from Jesus’ teaching today. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “Jesus taught and healed with power and authority. His words and actions revealed that His authority came from God. During His ministry, Jesus taught that our biggest problem is sin. Scripture points to Jesus as the Son of God who came to save us from our sin.

Let’s review our big picture question. [Guide the kids to say the big picture question together.] **What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Together we have learned that Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.** ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “As Jesus ministered in Capernaum and Galilee, He showed care as He healed the sick and performed many signs and wonders. Jesus showed His love for sinners by forgiving the paralyzed man and calling Levi to follow Him. Everywhere Jesus traveled, He revealed our need for a Savior. He taught the Pharisees that He is ruler over all, including the law. Today we will see that, as He continued teaching, Jesus explained what it looks like to live in God’s kingdom. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 5–7; Luke 6. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JESUS’ SERMON ON THE MOUNT

“One day, as large crowds followed **Jesus**, He **went up on a mountain and sat down**. He **began to teach**, saying:

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

Then **Jesus spoke about how people in His kingdom can point others to God**. He told the people to shine like light, so others would see their good works and give glory to God.

Jesus said: “I didn’t come to get rid of the law. I came to fulfill it. Unless your righteousness is greater than the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.”

Then **Jesus taught the people to do for others what they would want done to them**. He said that we shouldn’t just show love to those who love us. Instead, **Jesus told the people to love their enemies and do good, expecting nothing in return**. He said to be like God, who is gracious to sinners.

Jesus also taught the people how to pray, reminding them to pray for God’s will to be done. Jesus said to pray for their daily needs and for forgiveness.

Then **Jesus said, “Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or what you will wear.** Look at the birds—they don’t worry about who is going to feed them. And look at the flowers—they don’t worry about their clothes. But your heavenly Father takes care of them. And you’re worth much more than flowers and birds!”

Jesus told the people to be like a wise man who built his house on a rock. Even when the rain fell and the wind blew, the house remained standing. **Those who hear Jesus’ words and obey them will be like the wise man.**

Jesus taught the people many more truths. When He finished teaching, the crowds were amazed, because He taught with authority.

Christ Connection: Jesus taught how people in His kingdom have hearts that love God and love others. But because of sin, no one always does what is right and good. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and changes our hearts so we can live in ways that glorify Him. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Sculpt: Give kids a lump of play dough and encourage them to sculpt different things they hear throughout the story. Allow them to share their final creations with the group at the end.

Picture it: Use an online image search to display a picture of the Mount of Beatitudes in Israel, where Jesus likely stood as He addressed the crowd of people in today’s story.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “As Jesus taught, He called the people to reflect on God’s righteousness and yearn for it in their own lives. We are not perfect, but when we seek to live according to God’s standards, we reflect His glory for others to see. What kind of heart did Jesus say we must have to see God? **[Allow responses.]** The scribes and Pharisees tried to look good on the outside before others. On the inside, however, they still had evil hearts. Jesus emphasized that a pure heart wants to obey God out of love and gratitude for Him. Our hearts are corrupted by sin, but Jesus came to forgive our sin and make our hearts clean before God.

Did Jesus come to get rid of the law? **[Allow responses.]** Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament law that God’s people broke. The Pharisees tried to become pure through their actions, but Jesus explained that our good works cannot save us. Only through repenting of sins and trusting in Jesus are believers made righteous before God. This new righteousness changes both hearts and actions!

How did Jesus say to treat our enemies? **[Allow responses.]** Christians should show other people—even their enemies—the same mercy and grace that God has given them. Jesus also reminded them to pray for God’s will to be done. We don’t need to worry because God is in control of all things, including our lives. No matter what we face, Jesus shared that if we listen to His words, we will not be shaken.

Jesus taught how people in His kingdom have hearts that love God and love others. But because of sin, no one always does what is right and good. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and changes our hearts so we can live in ways that glorify Him. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “We are all guilty of sin and fail to obey God. But Jesus, through His perfect life and death, took the punishment for sin. When a person turns from sin and trusts in Jesus, God views them through Jesus’ righteousness, not their own. To learn more about what it means to trust your life to Jesus, you can speak to one of your parents or a church leader. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 23, Session 4” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. I accepted Jesus as my Savior, so why do I still worry?
2. How does Jesus help us have peace?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Show the “Erik and Ida Nelson Photo” printable.

Even as Erik grew older and his body was tired, he did not stop telling people about Jesus. One man Erik told about Jesus was named Herculano. He was 82 years old, and he lived in Brazil. Herculano did not own much—just some clothes, a few household items, and a small canoe with one paddle. But he had trusted Jesus as his Savior. Herculano decided to follow in the footsteps of Erik and spend the rest of his life telling others the good news about Jesus. Herculano often did not know exactly where to go, so he would pray: “Lord, if You want me to stop and tell someone about You, please let it rain when I pass their house.” God did just that! When it rained, Herculano stopped and told people about Jesus. Sometimes entire families believed in Jesus. God used Erik and Ida Nelson to tell Brazilians about Jesus. One Brazilian man who had very little used his canoe to do big things for God.

Pray that the Brazilian people will be willing to listen to the message of missionaries and people like Herculano to learn that God loves them so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for their sins.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Matthew 5:16 together.

SAY “Our key passage reminds us that Christians shine their light by doing good works so that others will give glory to God. Let’s review it one more time together!”

Write each word of the key passage on inflated balloons. Choose one kid to volunteer as the batter. Have the rest of the kids line up shoulder to shoulder. The batter must bat the balloons one at a time to his or her classmates, in the correct order of the key passage. As the kids catch the balloons, instruct them to hold the balloons out in front of themselves where the words can be seen. Once all the balloons have been batted, check to see if the passage is correct.

Lead kids to sing “Shine (Matthew 5:16).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “God, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to save us from sin and teach us what it looks like to live as part of Your kingdom. Help us to treat others in ways that reflect Your grace. Amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Israel Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Matthew 5. Explain that Jesus often taught from mountain tops. Share that while Matthew and Luke don't list the specific location of the mountain in the story, it was probably around or overlooking the Sea of Galilee.

Consider pointing out the location of Galilee [C5] on the New Testament Israel Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 5:14-16 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “Picture what it looks like when you enter a dark room and turn the light on. Sometimes the dark can seem scary and objects appear to be different than what they really are. But when the light is turned on, everything becomes clear. The Gospel of John reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the world (John 1). He illuminates our sin and need for a Savior. When a person repents and believes in Jesus, they become a part of God's kingdom. And as members of God's kingdom, believers can shine their light to others. Through believers' good works, people can see the light of Jesus.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “Is worry a sin?”

Remind kids that worry can be a sin when it causes us to lack faith in God. Share that God is sovereign, which means He is in control of everything. If God takes care of the flowers and the birds, we can trust Him to take care of us, too. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Proverbs 3:5-6.)

SAY “What does it mean to build our house on the rock?”

Explain that Jesus wasn't talking about building a literal house. Discuss what it looks like to build our life on Jesus and His Word. Followers of Jesus have a faith that remains steady, despite the ups and downs of life. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Hebrews 3:14.)

SAY “How can we show Jesus' love to our enemies?”

Answers will vary. Remind kids that Jesus commanded His followers to treat everyone like we would want them to treat us. By loving our enemies, we can shine Jesus' light to them. Explain that this does not mean that we allow people to hurt us, and if we are in a situation like that, it is important to talk to a trusted adult. We can love people while still holding healthy boundaries. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matthew 5:16.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: WACKY WAYS



Set up a table with the following three stations:

- Station One: A bowl, cereal, and straws
- Station Two: A banana and salad tongs
- Station Three: A jar of jelly, a slice of bread, and a pencil

Divide the kids between the three stations. The team at Station One must work together to move each piece of cereal out of the bowl using the straw. The team at Station Two must try to peel the banana using only salad tongs. And the team at Station Three must try to spread jelly on the bread using a pencil.

SAY “ These tasks had you doing something differently than you would normally do it. In a similar way, Jesus told His followers to live differently than the world does. Those who have trusted in Jesus are a part of God’s kingdom and should have hearts that love God and others. This will look different from how the world lives, and people may not always understand it, but God’s way is always best. ”

☐ OPTION 2: LIGHT IT UP

Blow up a balloon. Gather the kids in a circle on the floor and turn off the lights. Close any blinds to make the room as dark as possible, while still following your church’s risk management policy. Begin by rubbing the balloon back and forth on your hair or a kid’s hair with their permission until you create some static electricity. Hold the light bulb in your hand, pointed upward toward the balloon, near the spot where you rubbed the balloon. Don’t make contact between the bulb and the balloon. Move the balloon around the top of the bulb to produce a faint, flickering light from the bulb. If you have trouble, consider rubbing the balloon over another surface such as a blanket or carpet. Explain that static electricity caused a faint light to appear, but if the bulb was plugged in and turned on, it would shine very bright.

SAY “ We may not be light bulbs, but those who have trusted in Jesus do have a light inside of them. Jesus’ light shines through those who live as part of His kingdom so that others around us can see His glory! ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.